

PLAN MONITORING

To be successful, comprehensive planning must be an ongoing activity. Plan monitoring involves establishing accountability tools for tracking progress over time. The progress matrix (Table 5) is a basic plan monitoring tool that identifies timeframes for the accomplishment of catalyst actions: short-term (one to three years), midterm (three to five years), and long-term (five years and beyond).

Plan monitoring is a dynamic process. Key strategies, catalyst actions, and policy directives should be reviewed on an annual basis and refined with changing circumstances. As data become available, indicators or other specific measures that monitor the accomplishment of achievable goals should be established for each plan theme. Finally, the entire plan document should be considered for public review and update five years from its adoption.

Table 5: Progress Matrix

Catalyst Action	Completion Timeframe	% Complete
Conduct a sidewalk survey within the current incorporated Town boundaries and prepare recommendations for the construction and maintenance of new and existing sidewalks.	Short-term	___%
Update on an annual basis the Town's Three Mile Area Plan that serves to support Colorado statutory provision C.R.S 31-12-105, which requires that a municipality have a plan in place prior to the annexation of any land.	Short-term	___%
Prepare design guidelines and transition the Town's existing PD's and outdated zoning districts into one of the new zoning districts.	Short-term	___%
Prepare a Strategic Economic Development Plan to determine advantages and priorities for attracting a variety of new commercial and industrial development into identified employment center locations that will also meet the daily needs of area workers.	Short-term	___%
Update on an annual basis the Town's Capital Improvement Program that prioritizes water, wastewater, drainage and other infrastructure improvements over a rolling 5 year timeframe.	Short-term	___%
Integrate additional County Offices into Town facilities to foster the efficient provision of coordinated local government services for area residents.	Mid-term	___%
Negotiate an Intergovernmental Agreement with CDOT as initial step in securing a permit for the improvement of the I-70/SH 79 interchange.	Mid-term	___%
Work with Adams County to refine their TDR program by identifying updated sending and receiving areas consistent with the Preferred Scenario's four planning tiers	Long-term	___%

Acknowledgements

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welcome neighbors.

2015 TOWN OF BENNETT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The Town of Bennett, Colorado, is uniquely positioned to capture the next wave of growth within the Denver metropolitan area. Bennett's close proximity to Denver International Airport (DIA), the Front Range Airport, I-70, E-470, and the Union Pacific Railroad are all factors that will have a direct impact on the future growth of the Town; an incorporated area that currently totals 4.3 square miles.

Bennett's community leaders are visionary and willing to take bold steps to secure the Town's future. As a first step in implementing recommendations from a study completed in 2011 for the I-70 Regional Economic Advancement Partnership (REAP), the Town has identified a 91.4 square mile "Area of Planning Interest". Bennett's growth intentions are reflected by its objective to introduce a renewable water supply into its Area of Planning Interest. The prospect for growth associated with a renewable water supply is a fundamental tenet of this comprehensive plan.

Bennett is committed to responsible planned development, economic vitality, a program for public improvements, and improving the quality of life for its residents. The 2015 Town of Bennett Comprehensive Plan is a targeted update of Town's 2012 Comprehensive Plan. The 2012 Comprehensive Plan involved an extensive public engagement effort, including:

- A website dedicated to the project which provided details on upcoming meetings, meeting summaries and draft documents, as well as a comment form and contact information
- Four public workshops, each advertised in the I-70 Scout newsletter
- Several meetings with Adams County and Arapahoe County planning staff
- Work sessions with the Adams County and Arapahoe County Board of Commissioners, the Bennett Planning Commission and Town Board
- Public hearings before the Bennett Planning Commission and Town Board

USE OF THE PLAN

The 2015 Town of Bennett Comprehensive Plan is structured around a Preferred Scenario (pages 9-13) that serves as the heart of the plan, and eight plan themes: Neighborhoods, Employment, Open Lands, Transportation, Services and Infrastructure, Community Health, Annexation, and Intergovernmental Relations. Each plan theme contains an achievable goal, key strategy, catalyst action, and one or more policy directives:

- An achievable goal is a statement of an ideal condition that can accomplish objectives specific to a plan theme. An achievable goal is supported by one or more key strategies, catalyst actions, and/or policy directives;
- A key strategy is a statement of a specific approach directed toward the achievement of a goal;
- A catalyst action is a statement of an initiative that will dictate the success of reaching an achievable goal more than any other program or activity. The Plan Monitoring section (page 20) identifies the short-term, mid-term, and long term time frames established for implementation of catalyst actions; and
- A policy directive is a statement consistent with a strategy to prescribe, restrict or otherwise guide or direct an action.

This plan is intended to provide appointed and elected officials, land owners, project applicants, and other stakeholders with a broad policy tool for guiding decisions concerning future growth and land use. As the Area of Planning Interest is regional in scale, plan implementation will require intergovernmental coordination and an additional level of public policy guidance and in-depth study. The achievable goals, key strategies, catalyst actions, and policy directives detailed within this document serve as the first generation of what is anticipated to be an ongoing, dynamic planning process.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

A guiding principle is a core value or standard that provides direction for creating the plan. The following is a set of guiding principles, refined after feedback received from the public workshop conducted May 12th, 2011.

1. *Develop town and neighborhood centers with mixed land use and greater land density to shorten distances between homes, workplaces, schools, shopping, places of worship, cultural facilities, and recreation and social activities;*
2. *Design new developments in a manner to blend with the rural setting and preserve natural features and areas designated for agricultural production;*
3. *Ensure that affordable housing and access to healthy living is available for people of all ages and income levels;*
4. *Offer access to open space, trails and parks to provide more opportunities for walking, biking, recreation, and contact with nature;*
5. *Foster a distinctive, attractive community that retains our young people to support future community governance;*
6. *Preserve open space, farmland, and areas that have environmental significance to the region, particularly that are susceptible to flood hazard; are identified aquifer recharge areas; have natural mineral wealth; or are prime agricultural land;*
7. *New development should be contiguous, or nearly so, to existing infrastructure and services;*
8. *Provide a variety of transportation choices including bicycle trails; sidewalks; and mass transit to reduce the dependence upon automobiles; and create streets that are safe for use by automobiles, pedestrians, and bicyclists;*
9. *Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost effective, with the responsibility of designing and constructing the infrastructure required for new development shared by all parties receiving benefit; and*
10. *Remove barriers to collaboration, leverage funding, and increase the accountability and effectiveness of all levels of government to plan for future growth.*

VISION STATEMENT

A vision statement expresses the overall image of what a community wants to become in the future. The following vision statement has been adopted by the Bennett Town Board:

The Town Board of Trustees will proactively manage community needs to develop the Town of Bennett into one of the premier “rural town centers” of Colorado, providing optimum levels of service to our citizens.



SUMMARY OF PROJECTED GROWTH

The projections for the Area of Planning Interest show significant growth between 2010 and 2035. These projections were completed in 2005 by the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG), prior to the recent recession, and have been modified by Economic Planning Systems (EPS) to account for regional employment contraction. Notwithstanding this contraction, the future growth of the Bennett planning area remains strong.

As shown in Table 4, the planning area is estimated to grow by 6,454 housing units and 2,568 new jobs. This projected growth in housing units and employment creates the demand for 1,382 acres. 1,149 acres of land are needed to allow for the projected growth in housing. There is a projected demand for 43 acres of office, 71 acres of retail, and 118 acres of industrial land.

These base numbers were forecasted using DRCOG’s growth rates (with modifications by EPS) to reflect more current projections made by the Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) and the Center for Business and Economic Forecasts (CBEF).

The revised employment projections align job and housing expansion to reflect balanced growth in Bennett’s future. This reinforces one of the core concepts of the plan, that calls for neighborhood and employment centers with ample opportunities to live, work, and play locally.

The land area needed to fulfill market demands is much smaller than the collective Tier 2 Developing Urban locations within the Area of Planning Interest. The difference can be attributed to three factors:

- Growth will continue to occur beyond the 2035 forecast horizon;
- The plan’s nodal concept limits development intensity to areas within identified employment and neighborhood centers; and
- DRCOG’s forecast may not accurately reflect market pressures on the periphery of the Denver metropolitan area. Thus, market demand may exceed these figures.

Table 4:
Town of Bennett Growth Forecast, 2010-2035

Land Use	Factor	Change 2010-2035	
		Number of Units /Sq.Ft.	Acres Required
Additional Housing Units		6,454	
Avg. Household Size	2.65		
Additional Jobs		2,568	
Jobs to Housing Ratio	0.42		
Residential			
Low Density Single Family	3.5 DU/Acre	968	346
Medium Density Single Family	7.0 DU/Acre	3,872	691
Multifamily/Attached	18.0 DU/Acre	1,613	112
Commercial			
Office	0.2 FAR	252,310	43
Retail	0.2 FAR	424,000	71
Industrial	0.15 FAR	515,857	118
Total Acres			1,382

Source: Economic & Planning Systems

INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

The Area of Planning Influence for the 2015 Bennett Comprehensive Plan includes large areas of unincorporated Arapahoe and Adams Counties, as well as the City of Aurora. These three jurisdictions, along with the Town of Bennett, the Aurora and Bennett School Districts, the Bennett Fire Protection District, and the Bennett Recreation District are major stakeholders in ensuring coordinated regional planning. Ultimately, the realization of the Preferred Scenario and successful implementation of this comprehensive plan will hinge on the Town's ability to forge effective partnerships with these local government stakeholders.

Both Adams County and Arapahoe County updated their respective comprehensive plans in 2012. The City of Aurora completed a comprehensive plan update in 2009. While Bennett's planning area excludes the City of Aurora, there is a portion of Aurora's Northeast Plains strategic area within the unincorporated Area of Planning Interest (See Preferred Scenario Map).

During the development of the 2012 Town of Bennett Comprehensive Plan, the Town initiated a process to coordinate its planning ideas with the major stakeholders. Several important issues have been identified that could ultimately form the basis for one or more intergovernmental agreements, including:

- A governance structure for regional infrastructure improvements that include water, wastewater, transportation and open lands preservation;
- Revenue sharing from future commercial development;
- Joint development standards in anticipation of future annexation;
- Delineation of sending and receiving areas for TDR program;
- Regulatory changes to the airport influence zone framework; and
- Common interest in modifying the urban growth boundary allocation.

Achievable Goal: To create a cooperative framework for regional land use planning in the eastern I-70 corridor.

Key Strategy: Promote the coordination of local and regional plans through active participation and leadership in the Regional Economic Advancement Partnership and the updates to the Adams County and Arapahoe County comprehensive plans.

Catalyst Action: Integrate additional County Offices into Town facilities to foster the efficient provision of coordinated local government services for area residents.

Policy Directive: The Town shall work with DRCOG, the City of Aurora, Adams County and Arapahoe County on matters of inter-jurisdictional concern.



COMMUNITY PROFILE

BENNETT AT A GLANCE

The Town of Bennett is a growing community on the western edge of the eastern plains of Colorado. The Town was incorporated in 1930 and has steadily grown into a thriving and self-sustaining community within an excellent public school system and a growing hub for goods and services along the I-70 corridor. The Town boasts over six miles of walking and biking trails, numerous parks, a community center, a recreation center, and 200+ acres of protected open spaces. Furthermore, there is available land that is entitled for development, making Bennett an inviting place to do business.

Table 1: Population and Employment Characteristics

Population (2013 Estimate)	2,411
Population Growth (2009-2013)	4%
Median Age	35
High School Graduation Rate	93%
Median Income	\$58,860
Households	898
Owner Occupied Households	76%
Employed Population	77.6%
Workforce Employed Outside Bennett	72%
Residents Employed in Private Sector	82%
Average Cost Single Family Home	\$185,000
Cost of Living < Metro Average	9.1%

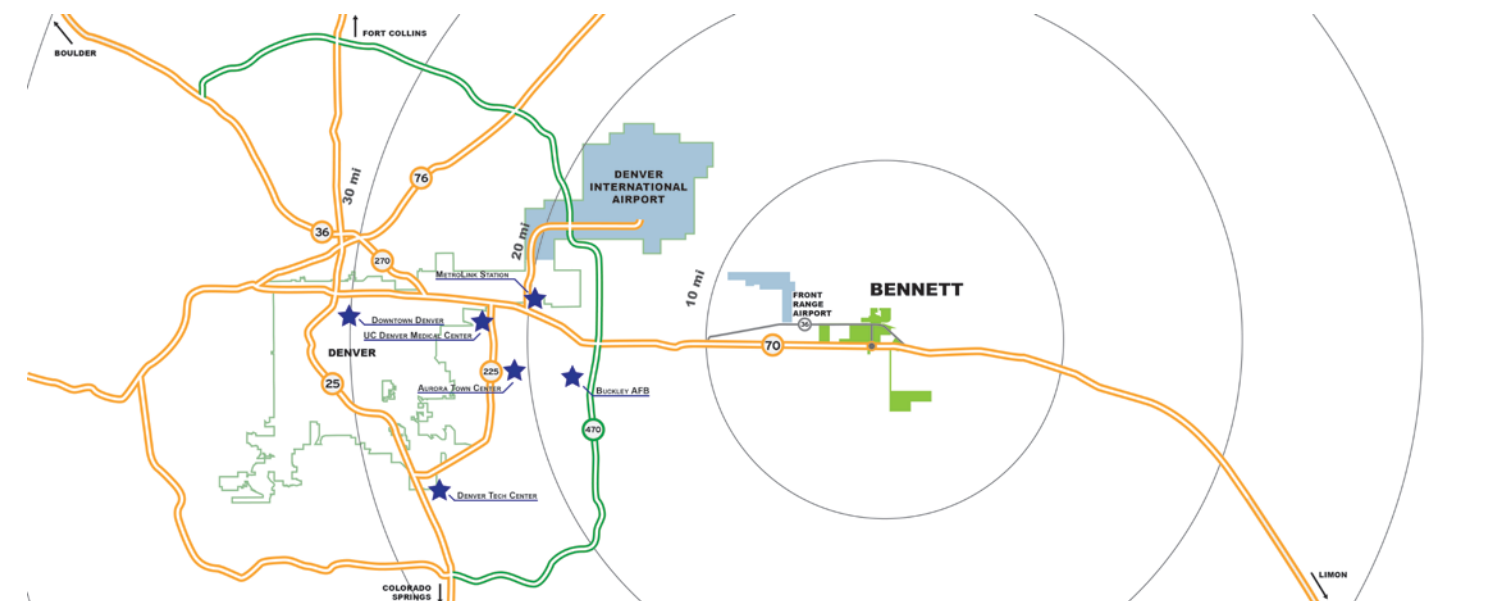
The Town's built environment can help keep people safe and prevent illness. Bennett's transportation and utility systems, distribution of housing stock, and retail commercial services can encourage people who live, work and play in Bennett to stay physically active and healthy. Indicators of a healthy community include access to healthy food and health care facilities (see Table 3).

Table 2: Commute Times

Front Range Airport	10 Minutes
Aurora	15 Minutes
Denver International Airport	20 Minutes
Downtown Denver	25 Minutes
Denver Tech Center	35 Minutes
Mountains	50 Minutes

Table 3: Healthy Community Indicators

Health Care Facilities	0
Miles to a Health Care Facility	20
Grocery Stores (10,000+ sq. ft.)	1
Seasonal Farmers' Markets	1
Children Who Qualify For Free And Reduced Cost Lunches	36.5
Qualifying Children Who Are Eating Free And Reduced-Cost Lunches	64.3
Women, Infant And Children (Wic) Clients	72
Tri-County Health Department Wic Nutrition Offices (Part-Time)	1



NEIGHBORHOODS

The Summary of Projected Growth (page 19) notes demand in the next 20 years for 6,454 additional housing units within the Area of Planning Interest. There currently is not a wide variety of housing options within the planning area and an increase in housing diversity is needed to accommodate future growth.

A guiding principle of this plan is to develop neighborhood centers that allow for a mix of land uses with increases in densities, which is a departure from the historic growth pattern in the corridor. Benefits of concentrated mixed use development include an efficient land use pattern that increases transportation choices, reduces energy consumption, promotes water conservation, and offers more opportunities for social interaction.

Neighborhood centers are characterized by a core of civic, educational, entertainment, office and retail uses that support surrounding residential uses of varying types and densities. Each center's development will vary in density and intensity from large master planned neighborhoods on the western side of the Area of Planning Interest to smaller in-fill projects within the Town Centre.

In 2014, the Town updated its Land Use Code, inclusive of zoning regulations and the Official Zoning Map. To foster new and infill residential development, several unbuilt residential Planned Developments (PD's) and the older, original Bennett neighborhood are proposed to be remapped into new zoning districts. The new zoning districts are intended to offer a more predictable and streamlined development process. Providing advisory residential design guidelines is also desired in lieu of the mandatory design standards removed during the Land Use Code update.

Achievable Goal: To provide a diversity of housing types at various densities.

Key Strategy: Foster innovative infrastructure practices, site planning, and mixed-use development patterns.

Catalyst Action: Prepare design guidelines and transition the Town's existing PD's and outdated zoning districts into one of the new zoning districts.

Policy Directive: The Town shall encourage master-planned, mixed-use development in concentrated centers.



ANNEXATION

A fundamental principle forming the basis for the Town's annexation policy is that annexation is an agreement between a willing land owner and a willing local government. The Town and property owner should enter into a pre-annexation agreement as a precursor to any annexation. Pre-annexation agreements establish the conditions of annexation and provide the Town and property owner with a set of negotiated obligations upon annexation.

Five (5) annexation priority areas are outlined on Figure 7, Annexation Priority Areas. These priority areas are intended to provide guidance, not an obligation, for future annexation by the Town of Bennett. In general, the Town's top priority is to annex areas contiguous to Town boundaries and within the I-70 corridor. Additional considerations include:

- With minor exception, Colorado annexation statutes limit the extension of a municipal boundary to no more than three-miles within any one year. In general, Annexation Priority Areas 1, 2, and 3 correspond to the three mile annexation boundaries;
- The timing of annexation into Priority Areas 2 and 3 will be dependent on the introduction of a renewable water supply into Bennett's Area of Planning Interest. Conversely, capacity in the Town's water supply may provide opportunity for annexation of potential industrial development in Area 4 and residential development in Annexation Priority Area 5; and
- The City of Aurora is located immediately adjacent to Bennett's Area of Planning Interest. The Aurora Strategic Area, which overlaps Annexation Priority Area 2 and 3, is an area that the City of Aurora may also have interest in annexing in the future.

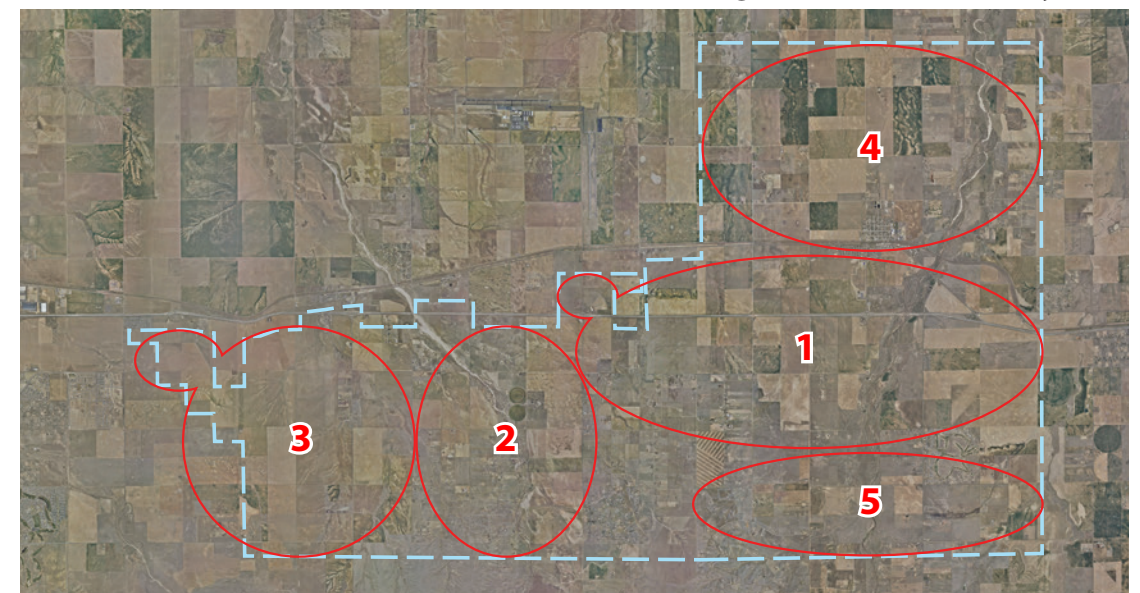
Achievable Goal: To support the development of Bennett as a model healthy community of interconnected employment and neighborhood centers.

Key Strategy: Utilize incorporated lands and public rights-of-way to establish contiguity for future annexation of land on a prioritized basis.

Catalyst Action: Update on an annual basis the Town's Three Mile Area Plan that serves to support Colorado statutory provision C.R.S. § 31-12-105, which requires that a municipality have a plan in place prior to the annexation of any land.

Policy Directive: Existing rural residential subdivisions in all annexation priority areas shall not be considered for annexation, unless critically in need of sewer and/or water service due to environmental concerns, failing septic systems, or poor water quality or quantity.

Figure 7: Annexation Priority Areas



COMMUNITY HEALTH

Bennett's commitment to healthy life style choices is reflected in their planning for recreational activity. The Town adopted its first Parks, Trails and Open Space Master Plan in 2009, followed by a Regional Trail Plan in 2011 (Figure 6). These plans emphasize the Town's commitment to recreational resources that support community health through physical activity and mobility within the community.

The relative size of Bennett makes its progress in implementing healthy eating and active living practices impressive. Bennett has developed a multi-use trail that extends from the residential core of the community to the local shopping center, enabling safer pedestrian and bicycle grocery trips. Bennett has also improved railroad crossings and striped two residential streets for bicycle lanes that are routes to local schools.

An overarching objective for Bennett's Comprehensive Plan is to increase opportunities for residents to make healthy choices related to food and physical activity by implementing sustainable policies and practices for the built environment. As such, there is a strong emphasis on community health as an underlying principle to the Town of Bennett Comprehensive Plan.

Achievable Goal: To promote healthy eating and active living.

Key Strategy: Increase public health resources through partnerships with organizations such as: Tri-County Health Department, LiveWell Colorado, the Colorado Health Foundation, and others as a model healthy community initiative.

Catalyst Action: Conduct a sidewalk survey within the current incorporated Town boundaries and prepare recommendations for the construction and maintenance of new and existing sidewalks.

Policy Directive: The Town shall ensure the creation of a built environment that supports healthy options for physical activity and good nutrition as foundations for sustainable health.

Policy Directive: The Town shall implement its Regional Trails Plan to provide for the recreational and tourism needs of residents and visitors, and encourage other sports or other recreational activity along with the commercial facilities supporting such uses.

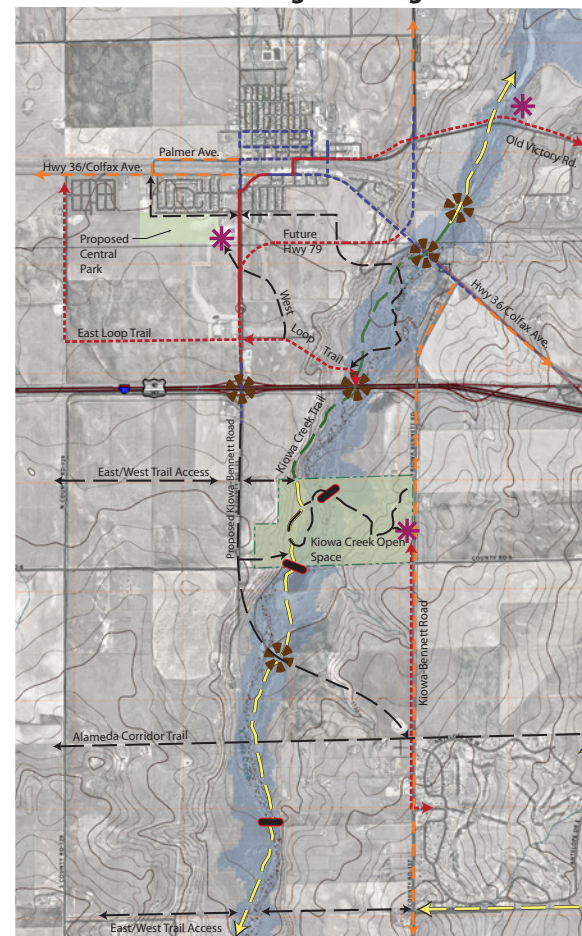
In particular, community health can be enhanced through the promotion of walking, bicycling, and transit as routine transportation choices. Transportation choices that include bicycle trails, sidewalks and mass transit reduce the dependence upon automobiles, and create streets that are safe for pedestrians and bicyclists alike.

The plan also recognizes that land use planning plays an important role in community health. One example: the proposed neighborhood centers with their higher densities and mixed land uses will help shorten distances between homes, workplaces, schools, shopping, and recreation. Shorter distances improve accessibility and walkability within the community for all age groups and demographics.

Beyond increasing transportation and land use choices, there should be a public health emphasis on good nutrition through best practices in healthy food access. Healthy food access can be supported by urban agriculture, community gardens, and locally sourced foods.

This section is intended to address the requirement that a master plan include a recreational and tourism uses element pursuant to C.R.S. § 31-23-207(5).

Figure 6: Regional Trail Plan



EMPLOYMENT

The Area of Planning Interest is part of the Airport/Montbello industrial space submarket, which is projected to capture 77.6 percent of the new growth in industrial space and ultimately represent 32 percent of the total industrial space in the Denver metropolitan area. As noted in the Summary of Projected Growth (Table 3), there is a projected demand for 118 acres of industrial land by 2035 within Bennett's planning area.

The concentration of commercial and industrial development into employment centers is a key component of the Preferred Scenario. These employment centers are proposed along the I-70 Corridor at major interchanges; parallel to the Union Pacific railway line; and proximate to E-470, SH 79, and 56th Avenue with excellent access to DIA and Front Range Airport.

The employment centers are intended to serve as a location for non-residential commercial and industrial land uses inclusive of large scale warehousing, manufacturing, outdoor storage, distribution, and trans-loading facilities. Additional supporting uses could include hotels, restaurants, child care centers, and small-scale retail.

Three of the proposed employment centers are located near the Front Range Airport Influence Zone which, as a result of federal and county regulations, only allows limited development. In particular, an employment center could not encroach within Restriction Area 1, which prohibits construction of structures for residential, commercial, institutional, or industrial uses. Employment centers are better suited for Restriction Area 2, which only prohibits the construction of residences. (See Preferred Scenario Map) Any development within this Airport Influence Zone will have to be coordinated with the Town, Adams County, and Arapahoe County.

As growth continues into the eastern I-70 Corridor region, Bennett is finding ways to balance economic development with the community's desire to maintain its rural and agricultural character. Since 2013, the "Bennett Community Market" has been the premier agricultural attraction along the I-70 Corridor and centerpiece of the recent Agritourism initiative. The Bennett Community Market has grown from a small composition of local fiber, artisan and few produce vendors to a strong economic vehicle in the agricultural community. In 2015, the market partnered with the High Plains Food Coop, a major regional food supplier of organically and naturally grown produce and meats comprised of Colorado farmers, ranchers and entrepreneurs. The Bennett Community Market reflects Bennett's ongoing commitment to maintain its agricultural heritage, stimulate economic development and foster healthy lifestyle choices.

Achievable Goal: To enhance the sales tax and employment base of the Town by attracting and retaining commercial and industrial development.

Key Strategy: Reserve land for future employment centers as delineated on the Preferred Scenario Map.

Catalyst Action: Prepare a Strategic Economic Development Plan to determine advantages and priorities for attracting a variety of new commercial and industrial development into identified employment center locations that will meet the daily needs of area workers.

Policy Directive: The Town shall proactively annex and zone land for employment centers.



Bennett Community Market

OPEN LANDS

The bulk of the Area of Planning Interest consists of open lands, characterized by large agricultural land holdings with pockets of very low density, large lot residential areas. The area also includes four major (one hundred year event) floodplains that serve as natural drainage ways and riparian corridors. Existing residents place a high value on their environment, and strongly desire the preservation of a rural lifestyle.

Significant oil and gas deposits are located within the subsurface Niobrara formation that underlies Bennett's Area of Planning Influence. Energy production has occurred in the area and such operations can be expected to expand depending on market conditions associated with the price of oil and natural gas. The impacts of oil and gas production on the Town's planning objectives and overall community health should be closely monitored by Town and County officials.

Tier Three Rural Preservation and Tier Four Environmental areas (see Preferred Scenario text on page 9) represent the open lands within the Area of Planning Interest. To compliment the core concept of Tier Two Developing Urban areas as concentrated growth centers, the Tier Three and Tier Four areas are proposed to be protected from development or allow only very low density rural residential development, using a range of planning tools including:

- A Transferable Development Right (TDR) program to allow landowners to transfer entitled density from Tier 3 Rural Preservation and Tier 4 Environmental "sending" areas to Tier 1 Stable Urban and Tier 2 Developing Urban "receiving" areas; participating parcels are protected with conservation easements;
- A Purchase of Development Right (PDR) program to allow landowners in Rural Preservation and Environmental areas to sell development rights to developers in Stable Urban and Developing Urban areas, relying on a public financing district or mechanism to generate a funding stream. As with a TDR program, land which has development rights purchased is protected with a conservation easement; and
- Conservation subdivisions to concentrate development and infrastructure provision in such a way that remaining open space areas are preserved. Conservation subdivisions may involve a single parcel, or two or more contiguous parcels, where each parcel is at least 70 acres in size. Proposed development cannot exceed two dwelling units for each 35 acre increment, yet may be clustered in smaller lots on a portion of the property with the remaining property in a conservation easement.

In order to maintain the rural character of the area, subdivided lots created through any of these tools should be screened, clustered, or distributed in such a manner as to minimize visual and environmental impacts, and to maximize the use of existing roads and utilities. Dedicated open space can also be used to buffer new development that occurs adjacent to existing or future rural residential neighborhoods.

Achievable Goal: To protect and preserve the rural nature of open lands.

Key Strategy: Identify parcels in Tier 3 Rural Preservation and Tier 4 Environmental areas for potential open space acquisition.

Catalyst Action: Work with Adams County to refine their TDR program by identifying updated sending and receiving areas consistent with the Preferred Scenario's four planning tiers.

Policy Directive: The use of community well and septic systems shall be encouraged where connection to an available water or sanitary sewer system is not feasible.

Policy Directive: The Town shall encourage future regional trails within riparian corridors while protecting their natural values.



Figure 4: Main Street-Downtown Concept - Plan View



Figure 5: Main Street-Downtown Concept - Birds Eye View



FINANCING STRATEGIES

The following financing tools are considered options for fostering infill and redevelopment activity:

Downtown Development Authority (DDA)

A DDA is funded primarily through Tax Increment Financing (TIF), funds generated by the incremental increase of sales and property taxes in the district. The implementation of a development project can be financed by bonds or advances from the Town that are repaid by the TIF.

Urban Renewal Authority (URA)

Urban renewal authorities are generally established to eliminate blighted areas for development or redevelopment by purchasing, rehabilitating, and selling land for development. An URA can fund real estate development, rehab financing, and infrastructure and is funded through a tax-increment financing on property and/or sales tax.

Business Improvement District (BID)

A business improvement district is a quasi-municipal corporation, which supports management, marketing, advocacy, and economic development. A BID can also issue bonds for capital improvements. BIDs are funded through an assessment or mil levy on commercial property.

Community Development Corporation (CDC)

A CDC is a grassroots 501c3 nonprofit organization that can help advance real estate and infrastructure improvements. CDC's are able to diversify funding for both operations and projects through access to charitable and government grants, earning income through services and projects, contracting for services to cities, towns, and other agencies. They can target resources to specific properties and work within and outside of assessment districts or other restrictive boundaries, and have the flexibility to respond to opportunities that an uncertain market may bring.

Metropolitan Districts

Metropolitan Districts are viewed in Colorado as an excellent vehicle for financing public improvements and increasing savings to developers and landowners. In 2014, the Town adopted a Model Service Plan to facilitate the creation of metropolitan districts.

Figure 3: Old Town Concept



TRANSPORTATION

As the next incorporated area east of Aurora, Bennett is experiencing substantial pressure from ongoing and future development. Ongoing development coupled with regional highway activity is significantly impacting the Town's existing roadway and traffic control systems. In 2009, the two main exits from Interstate 70 used to access the Town of Bennett were rated by CDOT in the poor (I-70/Kiowa-Bennett Road) and fair (I-70/SH 79) categories. Since 2009, impacts from heavy truck traffic generated by I-70 and the oil and gas industry has further deteriorated the I-70/SH 79 interchange, Bennett's main entry point. The I-70/SH 79 interchange experiences an Annual Daily Traffic Count (ADT) of vehicles, a significant percentage of which is semi-truck traffic. While the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) continues to make repairs on this exit, major improvement of this exit is necessary.

In addition, more than 88% of the streets in Bennett have surpassed their life expectancy. 80 of the Town's 94 street segments are at least 30 years old. Only 2.19 miles of streets in Bennett are in fair or good condition; the remaining 11.65 miles of streets are in poor condition.

Several studies addressing transportation needs within the Area of Planning Interest inform this comprehensive plan, including the SH 79 PEL Study, the Access Control Plan, the Downtown Bennett Planning Study, the Grade Separation Preliminary Feasibility Study, the Adams County Transportation Plan, the Arapahoe County 2035 Transportation Plan, and the City of Aurora Northeast Aurora Transportation Study. Key recommendations reflected on the Preferred Scenario Map include:

- Constructing three new interchanges on I-70 at Quail Run Road, Harback Road, and Yulle Road, and improving the existing Kiowa-Bennett Road interchange;
- Extending the existing and planned east/west roadways from Aurora into the Area of Planning Interest, including East 56th Avenue, East 6th Avenue/Mitchell Road, and East Jewell Avenue;
- The development of north/south arterial roads spaced every two miles south from I-70 to East Jewell Avenue; and

- The realignment of SH 79 east of Bennett, which begins south of 38th Avenue and ends just north of I-70, and the realignment of the Kiowa-Bennett Road to the west to connect with the existing Bennett interchange.

The Preferred Scenario Map also identifies the development of a dedicated truck route off realigned SH 79 south of the UPRR to an improved interchange at I-70, connecting with Kiowa-Bennett Road at 6th Avenue. Beyond improvements to the roadway network are proposed several phased transit elements:

- Express bus service to the Denver metro area, as the majority of the Area of Planning Interest is currently located outside the existing Denver Regional Transportation District (RTD) boundary; and
- The initiation of a local bus circulator or trolley service that will give residents the ability to travel between neighborhood and employment centers.

Potential transit improvements that extend beyond the 2035 planning horizon are delineated in Figure 1 and include:

- Commuter rail service to RTD's planned East Corridor commuter rail line using either the existing Union Pacific rail line or new rail installed in the I-70 median; and
- A high speed rail station located at an I-70 interchange in the Area of Planning Influence, with service from Denver.

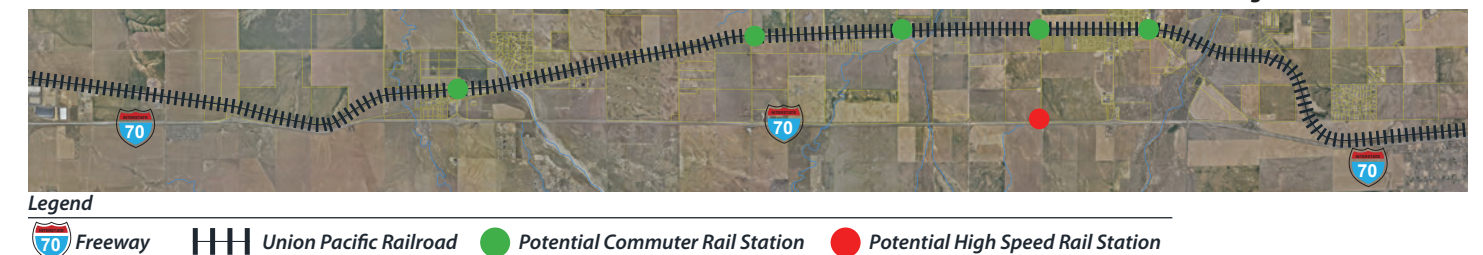
Achievable Goal: To provide a safe, efficient, and connected multi-modal transportation network.

Key Strategy: Improve vehicular access, traffic circulation and public safety at interstate highway interchanges accessing Bennett.

Catalyst Action: Negotiate an Intergovernmental Agreement with CDOT as initial step in securing a permit for the improvement of the I-70/SH 79 interchange.

Policy Directive: The Town shall work with DRCOG, CDOT, RTD and other regional transportation entities to coordinate development of a multi-modal transportation system.

Figure 1: Corridor Transit



SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The vast majority of Bennett's Area of Planning Interest is undeveloped with limited services or available infrastructure. While the Town of Bennett provides basic municipal services for its current population, the rural location of the community results in unique governing operations, such as the need to coordinate with two law enforcement agencies, a fire district that covers 325 square miles, a school district, and a recreation district.

Bennett's ability to accommodate future urban growth and development is also dependent on available infrastructure capacity. The Town's existing ground water and wastewater systems can support a maximum of 900 additional Single Family Equivalents, allowing for an estimated 300 acres of new development within and contiguous to Bennett's current incorporated area. Total land demand for development within the planning area during the next 25 years is estimated at approximately 1,400 acres; 4.5 times what Bennett can currently accommodate.

The condition of Bennett's wastewater treatment facility is a constraint on accommodating future growth. Currently, the Town's wastewater treatment facility is in violation of its Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) permit, with leaking lagoon liners, undersized electrical service, unprotected and exposed equipment, and frequent exceedances of its permitted capacity and discharge standards. The Town has increased sewer rates to accompany a long term plan to replace the facility with one that complies with CDPHE standards.

The Town's limited, non-renewable water resources underscore the need for a regional, renewable water supply. All water resources should be explored, including reuse, recycling, and reclaiming water. The development of a long term water supply plan that identifies infrastructure needs, water supply opportunities, and water quality concerns is recommended. Future needs related to wastewater treatment, transit systems, and open space acquisition also warrant a regional approach. Efficient region-wide services and infrastructure delivery system will limit the system's capital and operating costs, easing the fiscal burden on existing and future residents. Accordingly, the Preferred Scenario calls for concentrating new development in neighborhood and employment centers.

It is recognized that the magnitude of implementing the Preferred Scenario warrants a large-scale financing tool. A regional public financing entity, such as a General Improvement District, a Special Improvement District, a Metropolitan District, and/or other type of entity capable of generating revenue to support debt service is recommended. Further, a Regional Management Entity (RME) could be established under a district's service plan. The alternative is smaller-scale projects with fragmented infrastructure systems, which is not desirable.

Factors that should be addressed in the service plan are the ability of the district to have representation from local government on the board to ensure accountability to the community at large. It is expected that Adams County and Arapahoe County will play important roles, given:

- The need for commitment and participation in the formation of a financing district;
- Development interests may seek County entitlements; and
- Inclusion into a financing district will be a necessary component of County land use approvals.

In the long-term, there will be a substantial amount of assessed valuation and development activity to support a financing district. Establishing the district before market pressure builds is critical to creating a mechanism with a sufficiently large base to effect regional solutions.

Achievable Goal: To provide adequate services and facilities to support existing and projected areas of population and growth.

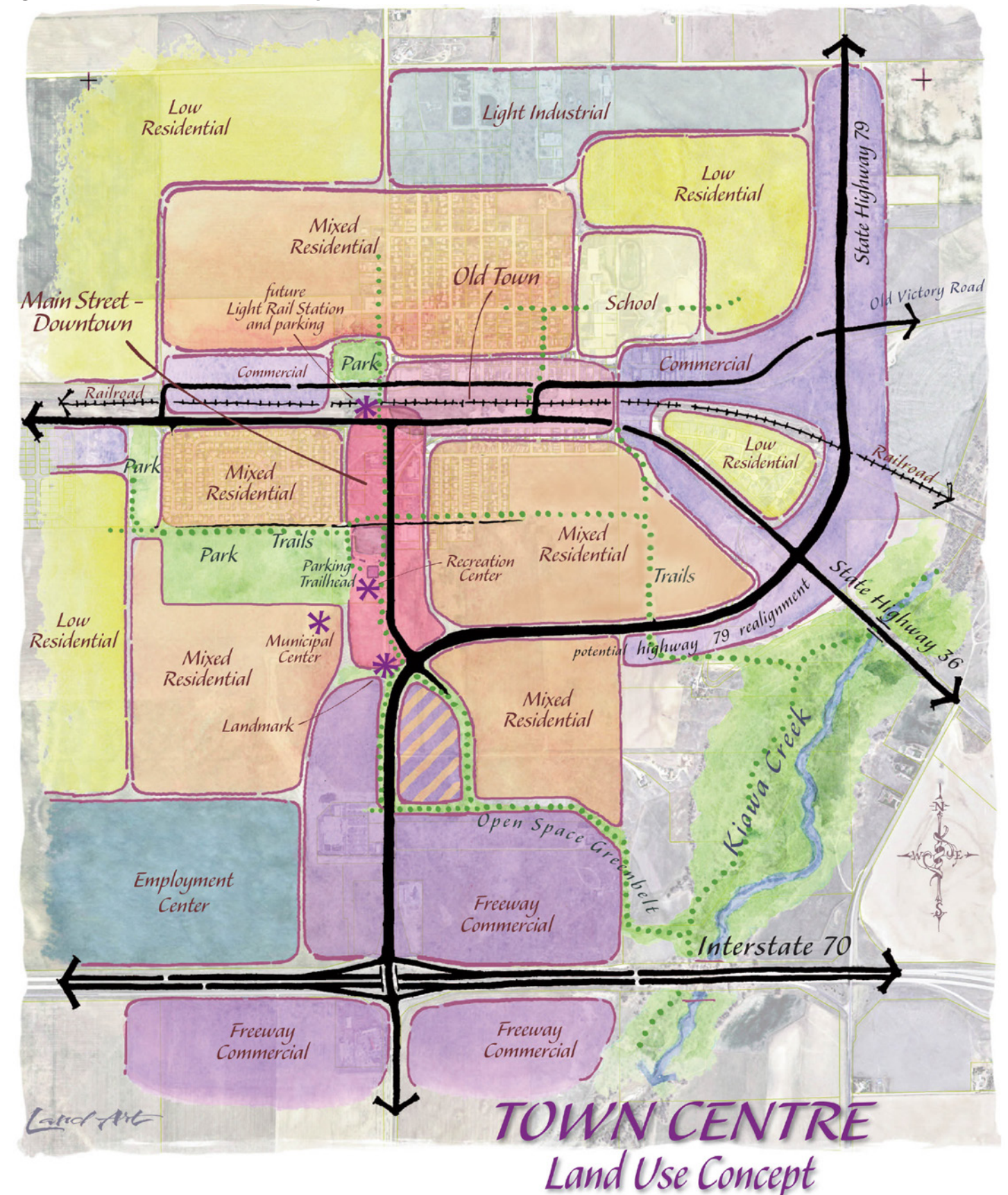
Key Strategy: Pursue grant funds to supplement the cost of major infrastructure projects.

Catalyst Action: Update on an annual basis the Town's Capital Improvement Program that prioritizes water, wastewater, drainage and other infrastructure improvements over a rolling 5 year timeframe.

Policy Directive: The Town shall support the use of special districts to finance the cost of new infrastructure and services, where appropriate.

Policy Directive: The Town supports the exploration of a full range of options for serving the area with water, wastewater, and drainage system infrastructure.

Figure 2: Town Centre Land Use Concept



TOWN CENTRE LAND USE CONCEPT

The 2010 Downtown Planning Study was an important opportunity for the Town to analyze and explore future possibilities for infill development and redevelopment of Bennett north of I-70. Its Land Use Concept Plan (Figure 3) addresses future infrastructure and civic improvements while identifying opportunities for higher density development orientated to the proposed Main Street-Downtown and Old Town land use areas (see Figures 3, 4 and 5). Increased residential density near the historic center of the Town will allow for diverse housing opportunities that will appeal to both young adults and the increasing retirement age population. Lower density residential opportunities are reserved for the outlying edges of the Town Centre. Employment center, light industrial and commercial uses are focused along the SH 79 and SH 36 highway corridors.

TOWN CENTRE LAND USE CATEGORIES

Main Street – Downtown

The Main Street-Downtown focuses attention on a pedestrian oriented environment where accessibility and visibility are key. Retail is anticipated on a smaller scale with the buildings on the street creating energy and vitality through art, food, music, and entertainment. Residential uses may include single family attached and small multi-family, live/work units, and vertical mixed use with ground floor retail.

Old Town

Old Town is the historic commercial center of Bennett. This area is bisected by the railway line where transportation continues to allow easy access to farming goods and services. This historic core continues to be a vital area for affordable and accessible commercial properties. Expanding upon the Main Street - Downtown theme, street improvements are envisioned where sidewalks, street trees, lighting, and parking all create an urban spine that revitalizes this important commercial center.

Commercial Mixed Use Corridor

These areas are adjacent to the realignment of SH 79 and SH 36 (E. Colfax Avenue) serving a high volume of vehicular traffic on a regional route including semi-tractor trailers. Residential is secondary and needs to be compatible with the commercial uses along this corridor.

Mixed Residential

Mixed Residential neighborhoods will contain a variety of housing types, combined with non-residential secondary land uses that are complementary and supportive. These areas should meet a wide variety of every-day living needs, encourage walking to gathering places and services, and integrate into the larger community. Other supporting land uses, such as parks and recreation areas, religious institutions, and schools may be included in Mixed Residential areas.

Low Residential

Low density residential uses are typically less than 5 dwelling units per acre and comprised of single-family detached housing. Low Residential areas are intended to provide housing to accommodate a wide range of price ranges, from affordable starter homes to upscale planned neighborhoods managed by homeowner associations.

Freeway Commercial

Freeway commercial land uses accommodate larger scale retail uses and cater to a regional population traveling along the I-70 and SH 79 corridors. As the principal gateway to Bennett, this area needs to provide continuity between the larger scale regional development and the smaller scale commercial and residential areas of Bennett progressing from I-70 along SH79 into Main Street.

Light Industrial

The Light Industrial area on the northern edge of the town core allows of a wide variety of industrial land uses that contribute to the employment base. The light industrial centers should integrate buildings, outdoor spaces, and transportation facilities, with minimal levels of dust, fumes, odors, refuse, smoke, vapor, noise, lights, and vibrations.

Employment Center

The Employment Center proposed near the I-70/SH79 interchange is intended to serve as a location for non-residential commercial and industrial uses in a campus-style, business park configuration. See page 5 for additional details on employment centers.

PREFERRED SCENARIO

Three (3) plan alternatives and a draft preferred scenario were reviewed at public workshops held on July 28, 2011, and August 30, 2011. The Preferred Scenario, provides a conceptual planning framework that is consistent with the Town's vision and guiding principles.

The Preferred Scenario Map identifies two geographic distinctions:

- 1. The Area of Planning Interest, which includes the Town of Bennett and an unincorporated planning area within Adams and Arapahoe counties; and
- 2. The Area of Planning Influence, a potential growth area within the I-70 Corridor that may impact the Area of Planning Interest that includes the community of Watkins, Front Range Airport, and an undeveloped portion of northeast Aurora.

The Area of Planning Interest is further categorized into four planning tiers:

Tier One: Stable Urban
That portion of the existing incorporated Town of Bennett, which for the most part is a well developed and mature urban environment with adequate services and infrastructure capability. Tier One areas also include the Main Street-Downtown and Old Town areas proposed for redevelopment in the Town Centre Land Use Concept.

Tier Two: Developing Urban
Areas where development either contiguous to Tier One or as stand-alone neighborhood and employment centers is contemplated. Developing Urban areas are characterized by direct access to I-70 and proposed arterial roadways and transit, and the potential for targeted delivery of infrastructure and urban services.

Tier Three: Rural/ Rural Preservation
The bulk of the Area of Planning Interest, this tier includes existing rural residential neighborhoods, large lot development, very low density cluster development, and large agricultural land holdings that desire to remain rural or rural in character. The Open Lands element calls for a number of mechanisms to protect and/or preserve Tier Three areas.

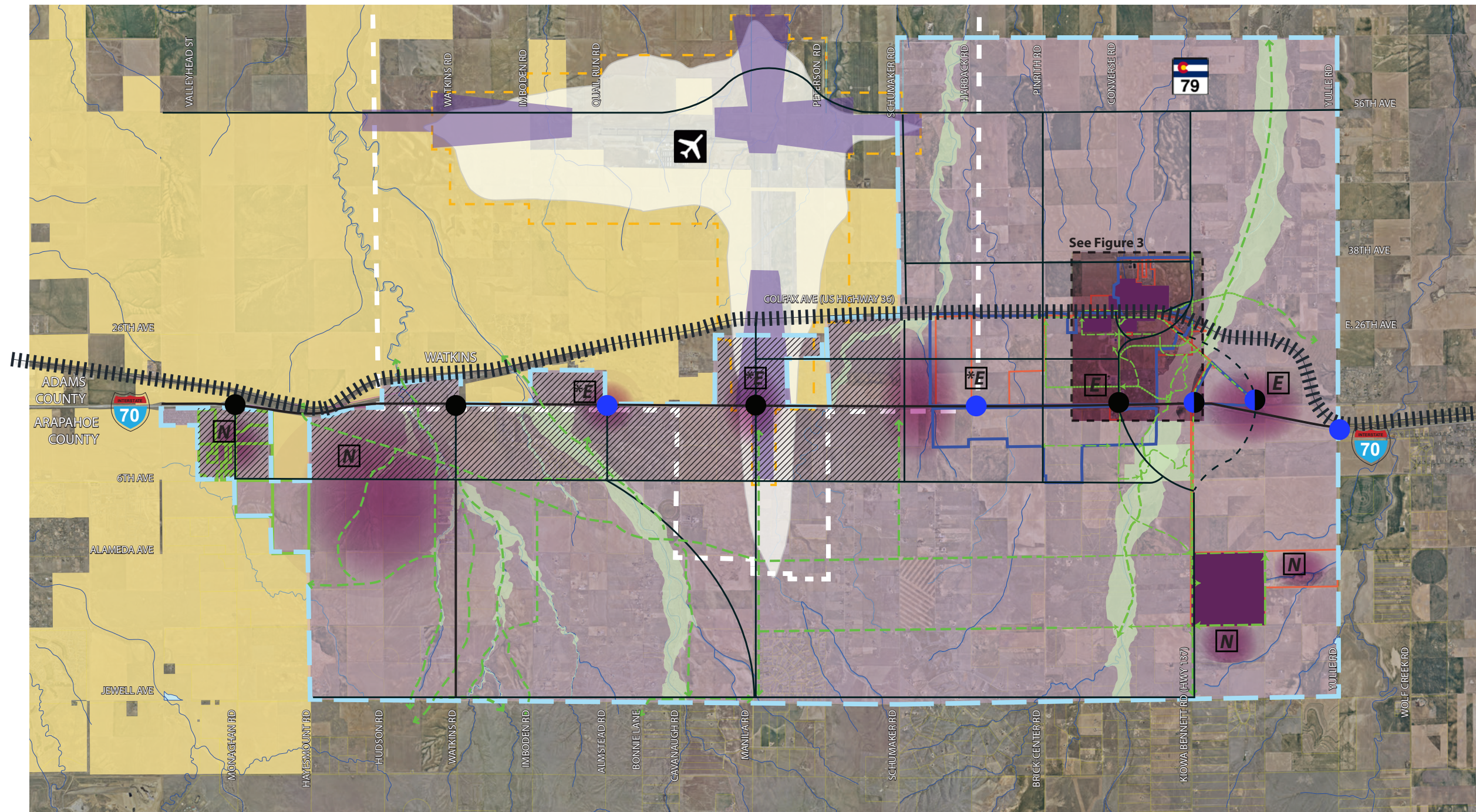
Tier Four: Environmental
Tier Four areas are the designated one-hundred year flood plains. Environmental areas represent significant value to current and future residents in terms of open space, trail systems, passive recreation, flood control, water quality, and water supply.

The four planning tiers, originally conceived in the 1999 Town of Bennett Comprehensive Plan, address the potential for development within Bennett's Area of Planning Interest. The assumptions derived from the 1999 comprehensive plan that shaped the preparation of the 2012 comprehensive plan and remain relevant today are:

- Residential and commercial development is inevitable due to regional growth pressures, proximity to transportation infrastructure, and availability of services;
- Adams County and Arapahoe County recognize Bennett's interest in development issues; and
- Distinction can be made between varying levels of development within Bennett's geographic area of interest.

The Preferred Scenario envisions a healthy, sustainable community where residents can live, work, and play locally, setting Bennett and its proximity to the I-70 corridor apart from a conventional development pattern. Key elements of the Plan include:

- Future land development is concentrated in mixed use, master-planned neighborhood, and employment centers wrapped with agricultural lands and very low density rural development;
- The open land between neighborhood and employment centers becomes a valuable community asset, with a regional trail system along riparian corridors providing important recreational and environmental linkages;
- Access, mobility, and circulation are improved as development occurs, with bus transit providing service between neighborhood and employment centers while commuter or high speed rail options are explored;
- An efficient service and infrastructure delivery system limits capital and operating costs, easing the fiscal burden of existing and future residents;
- Intergovernmental Agreements (IGA's) between/among Arapahoe County, Adams County, Aurora, and Bennett address coordination of land use issues, public financing districts, joint development standards, capital investment policies, and potential for revenue sharing; and
- The integration of a summary of the 2010 Town of Bennett Downtown Study and its land use concept into the Preferred Scenario as the Town Centre Land Use Concept.



Legend

- | | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|---|
| Area of Planning Interest | DRCOG Urban Growth Boundary | Freeway | Planning Tier 1: Stable Urban |
| Area of Planning Influence | Front Range Airport | State Highway | Planning Tier 2: Developing Urban |
| Town of Bennett | Airport Influence Zone | Union Pacific Railroad | Employment Center
* Subject to Airport Influence Zone restrictions |
| City of Aurora | Airport Restriction Area #1 | Existing Interchange | Neighborhood Center |
| Aurora Strategic Area | Airport Restriction Area #2 | Proposed Interchange | Planning Tier 3: Rural/ Rural Preservation |
| State Land Board | 55 DNL Noise Contour | Proposed Arterial | Planning Tier 4: Environmental |
| | | Proposed Truck Bypass | Proposed Regional Trail |



PREFERRED SCENARIO MAP